

# Leading Medical Organizations Endorse Strong School and Childcare Vaccination Requirements and Elimination of Non-Medical Exemptions

*School and childcare immunization requirements are central to efforts to ensure high vaccination rates for our nation's children. Having a highly vaccinated population protects not only the children who receive vaccines, but also infants who are too young to be vaccinated, other children who cannot be vaccinated due to certain medical conditions, and other people in the community at risk of severe illness if exposed to vaccine-preventable infections.*

*Allowing exemptions to school- and childcare-required vaccinations that are non-medical (e.g. religious or philosophical) erodes vaccination rates and increases the risk of community outbreaks. Recognizing the benefits and safety of vaccines for children and the risk of disease outbreaks when vaccine exemption rates increase, the following medical, nursing, and public health organizations oppose states' policies allowing exemptions that are non-medical.*

1. **American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP)** supports immunization of infants, children, adolescents, and adults as defined by recommendations set forth in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and approved by the AAFP. "With the exception of policies which allow for refusal due to a documented allergy or medical contraindication, the AAFP does not support immunization exemption policies." *2015 September Board of Directors; 2016 Congress of Delegates*  
**LINK:** [www.aafp.org/about/policies/all/immunizations-exemptions.html](http://www.aafp.org/about/policies/all/immunizations-exemptions.html)
2. **American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)** "recommends that all states and the District of Columbia use their public health authority to eliminate nonmedical exemptions from immunization requirements." *Committee on Practice and Ambulatory Medicine, Committee on Infectious Diseases, Committee on State Government Affairs, Council on School Health, Section on Administration and Practice Management; September 2016*  
**LINK:** <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/138/3/e20162145.full.pdf>
3. **American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)** recognizes that "non-medical exemptions from immunizations – personal, philosophical or religious – endanger the health of the exempted and other individuals, communities, and our nation. ACOG opposes non-medical exemptions from state immunization requirements and urges ob-gyns to educate and encourage patients to get immunized." *Executive Board; June 2019*  
**LINK:** [www.acog.org/-/media/Statements-of-Policy/Public/99VaccineExemptions.pdf?dmc=1&ts=20190919T1728130898](http://www.acog.org/-/media/Statements-of-Policy/Public/99VaccineExemptions.pdf?dmc=1&ts=20190919T1728130898)
4. **American College of Physicians (ACP)** "urges chapters to advance policies at the state level that eliminate any existing exemptions, except for medical reasons, from their immunization laws and/or oppose legislation to expand exemptions." *Division of Governmental Affairs and Public Policy; July 2015*  
**LINK:** [www.acponline.org/acp-newsroom/state-immunization-laws-should-eliminate-non-medical-exemptions-say-internists](http://www.acponline.org/acp-newsroom/state-immunization-laws-should-eliminate-non-medical-exemptions-say-internists)
5. **American Medical Association (AMA)** policy "recommends that states have in place an established decision mechanism that involves qualified public health physicians to determine which vaccines will be mandatory for admission to schools and other public venues. States should only grant exemptions to these mandated vaccines for medical reasons." *Press Release; June 2015*  
**LINK:** [www.ama-assn.org/press-center/press-releases/ama-supports-tighter-limitations-immunization-opt-outs](http://www.ama-assn.org/press-center/press-releases/ama-supports-tighter-limitations-immunization-opt-outs)
6. **American Nurses Association (ANA)** states "Given the recent surge of measles cases and potentially uncontrollable outbreaks of other vaccine-preventable illnesses, ANA no longer supports religious exemption as a reason to not get vaccinated. ANA believes that to protect the health of the public, all individuals should be immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases." *ANA Membership Assembly; June 2019*  
**LINK:** [www.nursingworld.org/news/news-releases/2019-news-releases/american-nurses-association-takes-action-on-critical-public-health-issues/](http://www.nursingworld.org/news/news-releases/2019-news-releases/american-nurses-association-takes-action-on-critical-public-health-issues/)
7. **Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA)** recommends that "states should eliminate exemptions to immunization mandates based on non-medical indications, because intentionally unvaccinated individuals pose an unacceptable danger to the public." *Board of Directors, June 23, 2012.*  
**LINK:** [www.idsociety.org/globalassets/idsa/policy--advocacy/current\\_topics\\_and\\_issues/immunizations\\_and\\_vaccines/statements/062312-idsa-policy-statement-on-state-immunization-mandates.pdf](http://www.idsociety.org/globalassets/idsa/policy--advocacy/current_topics_and_issues/immunizations_and_vaccines/statements/062312-idsa-policy-statement-on-state-immunization-mandates.pdf)
8. **National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO)** "advocates for policies that reduce or eliminate religious and philosophical exemptions from [school and child care] requirements." *Board of Directors; July 2019*  
**LINK:** [www.naccho.org/uploads/downloadable-resources/16-01-School-and-Child-Care-Immunization-Requirements.pdf//jama.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=2503179](http://www.naccho.org/uploads/downloadable-resources/16-01-School-and-Child-Care-Immunization-Requirements.pdf//jama.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=2503179)
9. **National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP)** "In an effort to ensure that all pediatric populations are protected against vaccine-preventable illness and remain healthy, NAPNAP affirms that NPs [nurse practitioners] and other pediatric health care providers must . . . lead policy change in states to eliminate nonmedical exemptions for school entry." *Executive Board; June 9, 2018*  
**LINK:** [www.jpeds.org/article/S0891-5245\(18\)30378-X/pdf](http://www.jpeds.org/article/S0891-5245(18)30378-X/pdf)
10. **Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society (PIDS)**, "whose membership constitutes individuals dedicated to the treatment, control, and eradication of infectious diseases in children, opposes legislation or regulations that would allow children to be exempted from school and childcare immunization requirements based on their parents' personal or religious beliefs (non-medical exemptions). Exemptions from school and childcare requirements can lead to outbreaks of disease." *March 2019*  
**LINK:** [www.pids.org/images/docs/Advocacy/Pediatric\\_Infectious\\_Diseases\\_Society\\_Position\\_on\\_Non.pdf](http://www.pids.org/images/docs/Advocacy/Pediatric_Infectious_Diseases_Society_Position_on_Non.pdf)